(b) During the past two months, there have been agitations by some Unions. The Badli workers are agitating and demanding idle wages on par with the permanent workers.

(c) On the basis of a unit wise viability study made by NTC, Government is considering a revised turn around strategy for the viable subsidiaries of NTC alongwith the viable mills under them keeping in view the BIFR norm of the net worth of these mills turning positive, within the period prescribed by BIFR. The interest of workers will be kept in view in the revival plan.

Textile Mills closed in Assam

1857. SHRI PRAKANTA WARISA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of textile mills lying closed in Assam, mill-wise;

(b) the production capacity of these mills which is being lost everyday; and

(c) the effective measures taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) and (b) As on 30.9.98, 4 Cotton/Man-made Fibre Textile Mills were lying closed in the State of Assam. The names of the mills and the capacity affected are given below:

Name of the mill	Capacity Affected (spindles)
Assam Coop. Spg. Mills	7680
Assam Polytex	16184
Sahid Kusal Kanwar Sutakal Ltd.	11040
Assam Syntex Ltd.	17280

(c) Among other measures taken by the Government to tackle the problems of industrial sickness in general (including textiles) was the establishment of a Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) under the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985. Recently the Government have set up an Expert Committee under the Chairmanship of Shri S.R. Sathyam, a former Secretary (Textiles) inter-alia, to have a fresh look at the existing Textile Policy. One of the terms of references of the said Committee is to review the measures taken so far for tackling sickness in the textile industry and to make suggestions for improving the economic viability of the textile industry as also to identify steps which would be necessary to prevent and tackle sickness in the industry, including the need for structural adjustments through re-deployment of labour and capital.

In addition, a Textile Upgradation Fund Scheme is being proposed to be launched to encourage investment in new technology. The Scheme intends to give accent to the post spinning sub sectors (weaving, processing and garments) to be financed by the financial institutions with the Government extending an interest incentive of 5 percentage points. Also, a Cotton Technology Mission has been proposed for cotton development aiming to cover in a coordinated fashion different areas like increasing productivity, improving research, marketing and post harvest activities.

Discontinuation of Janata Cloth Scheme

1858. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to discontinue the Janata Cloth Scheme;

(b) if so, the reasons for taking such decision;

(c) whether any other alternative scheme is proposed to be introduced to provide cloth to the people below the poverty line at reasonable prices; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) and (b) A Committee constituted in the year 1991, to review the Janata Cloth Scheme

observed that it has contributed to the de-skilling of the weavers by producing cloth of low unit value and therefore, recommended for phasing out of the scheme. The Government after examining the recommendations of this Committee, introduced package-II under Janata Cloth Scheme in the year 1993-94 with the objective of enabling handloom weavers to graduate to production of higher value textile goods and to provide alternate employment to handloom weavers displaced on account of phasing out of Janata Cloth Scheme and also decided to phase out the scheme by 1996-97. The Government, however, extended the scheme for the year 1997-98 so as to facilitate the transition.

(c) and (d) Consequent to gradual phasing out of Janata Cloth Scheme, the Government introduced two major developmental schemes-the Project Package Scheme w.e.f. 1991-92 and the Handloom Development Centre Scheme w.e.f. 1993-94 to provide critical support in an integrated and coordinated manner to the handloom weavers, including the marketing support for sale of all their products to the people, including those below the poverty line.

Jute Industry

1859. SHRI O. RAJAGOPAL:
PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA:

Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Jute Industry is in deep trouble";

(b) if so, the details in this regard; and

(c) the steps taken by Government in this regards

THE MINISTER OF TEXTI' (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) to The scenario of the Jute Industry ha turned out to be most favourable during the last two years. Both during 1997-98 and 1998-99 seasons, the raw jute supply position has been comfortable at reasonable prices. As a result jute industry has faced no problem to maximise production of jute goods to cope up with the huge demand.

A number of steps have been taken by the Government for promotion of jute industry which, inter-alia, include enactment of Jute Packaging Materials (Compulsory use in Packing Commodities) Act, 1987 and issue of statutory reservation orders thereunder from time to time; abolition of excise duty on all items of jute products from 1st March 1997; continuation of policy regarding purchase of jute bags from mills for Government procurement agencies on cost-plus prices; implementation of External Market Assistance Scheme; upward revision of rates of cess on jute manufactures to a maximum level for generating adequate resources for export promotion; Re-orientation of R&D activities under ongoing programme of jute diversification; setting up of National Centre for Jute Diversification; accelerated market promotion efforts by JMDC under UNDP-assisted jute sector programme.

Irregularities in purchase of subsidized yarn

1860. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the yarn which is supplied to the powerloom and handloom units is not reaching the people who really need it;

(b) whether it is also a fact that it is being purchased by some associations at subsidized rates and it ends up in the open market; and

(c) if so, the action taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) There is no control on the sale of yarn. No specific yarn is earmarked for powerloom and handloom units. There is no scarcity of yarn in the open market.